



**BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL
BUSINESS COUNCIL**

BRIDGEPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
STRAITFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
TRUMBULL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LEADERSHIP GREATER BRIDGEPORT
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**STATEMENT BY PAUL S. TIMPANELLI, PRESIDENT & CEO
BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL BUSINESS COUNCIL**

Relative to: House Bill 5460, AAC Captive Audience Meetings

**Labor and Public Employees Committee
February 3, 2011**

The *Bridgeport Regional Business Council* is the greater Bridgeport region's premier business membership association representing 1,000 businesses and serving as an economic development partner to our region's communities. Our membership ranges from each of the largest employers in our region to hundreds of small businesses. Our membership's common interest is in the economic growth of our state and in limiting the burdens that are placed on the state's businesses in order to help assure that growth.

As our state confronts what seems to be mounting economic challenges, we urge our legislative leadership and rank and file to devote all of its energies and commitment to the economic recovery of our state. Balancing the budget must be your first priority. Our state's deficit is mounting and our bonded indebtedness is out of control. Our projected deficits will mean our children will face an uncertain future burdened to the point of bankruptcy!

These obstacles to our economic prosperity must be confronted. Until they are adequately addressed, all other matters, particularly those that add burdens to business, are irrelevant!

To consider bills like the Captive Audience bill, at any time, is anathema to our common goal of economic growth, but to consider such an added burden to business at this time, is particularly troublesome and wrong-headed.

Under the NLRA, employers must now comply with federal regulations regarding employer-employee speech. In 2004, the General Assembly considered this concept and made the right decision to reject it. One of the reasons is that the "NLRA guarantees the employer's right to express an opinion about unionization as long as the employer does not also threaten reprisal or promise a benefit".

This bill would, if enacted, further denigrate our ability to be competitive in an increasingly competitive business environment. The mere fact that such legislation is even proposed sends the wrong message about our willingness and our capacity to be a place that is hospitable to business growth. Our situation needs to be changed, and we must send the message that we are open to

business. We cannot overstate the importance of the message that we must send to the world. Connecticut is a place for Connecticut!

As one of our region's economic development partners and its regional chamber of commerce, we seek to partner with the legislature to improve Connecticut's climate for business, to help create jobs not inhibit the environment for job growth and to undertake initiatives that would nurture jobs not threaten their existence.

WE urge you to focus your attention, your energy and your passion for our state on balancing the budget, reduce the debt, rid ourselves of deficit spending, and create the environment that enables job growth.

Please defeat House Bill 5460.